

By the appearance of this volume, the botanists of Philadelphia are provided with a pocket companion for their journeys afield more satisfactory than any available for other parts of our country. There is little room, apparently, for improvement in later editions, save in the insertion of newly acquired data and the addition of a good map of the region.

JOHN HENDLEY BARNHART.

**Lord Avebury's Notes on the Life History of British Flowering Plants\***

This work is not intended to be in any sense a manual for the determination of the species inhabiting the British Isles, but instead, taking up the flora in Bentham's sequence and in general with his specific limitations, it furnishes descriptions of the various plants in such a way as to emphasize the points in their structure which bear most directly upon the peculiar problems presented by their life conditions.

The spirit of the author is perhaps best indicated by the conclusion to the introduction in which he says: "To many, indeed, systematic botany is the most interesting department of the science; to others it is the entrance and outer court of the temple; and when we realise that for every shade of colour, for all the exquisite beauty of flowers, for the endless difference in the size, forms, and textures of leaves, for the shape and colour of fruits and seeds, there are, if we only knew them, good and sufficient reasons, nature seems endowed with new and vivid life, with enhanced claims on our love, wonder, and devotion."

From this point of view a great mass of facts is presented dealing especially with such subjects as fertilization and seed distribution but also including almost every line of inquiry connected with plant life.

Although the flora dealt with is so limited in range, the book will be of interest and value alike to students and nature-lovers in every locality. This is especially true of the introduction, wherein a concise but comprehensive general discussion of its many problems supplies a most readable summary of the subject.

\* Avebury, Lord (John Lubbock). *Notes on the Life History of British Flowering Plants* 8vo. Pp. i-xxiii + 1-450. *f.* 1-352. London and New York, 1905. The Macmillan Co.

It will doubtless be regretted by some that Lord Avebury did not adopt a systematic sequence from the lowest forms to the highest and enter upon the principles of classification sufficiently to show the correlation of the increasing complexity of the structures and functions described with the higher position accorded the plant in the scheme. This, however, might introduce much debatable matter, and is not included in the scope of the book.

Upon another much-debated subject his opinion is of interest in view of recent discussions. "In fact, it is becoming more and more a surprise how the older botanists can have regarded species as fixed and invariable. . . . It may almost be said that, as a rule, when plants are studied under dissimilar conditions, or in various parts of their area, they will be found to present considerable differences, so that, as our knowledge advances, the definition and limits of species become, not more easy and definite, as might perhaps have been expected, but more and more difficult and debatable." This conclusion will hardly be conceded by those who believe that a wide range of individual differences is by no means inconsistent with sharply defined specific limits, nor will it be too favorably received by the believers in the new doctrine of mutation.

The work will be hailed as a valuable contribution to a branch of botanical investigation which receives a smaller share of attention than its fascinations would lead one to expect.

C. B. ROBINSON.

## PROCEEDINGS OF THE CLUB

JANUARY 9, 1906

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 P. M., at the American Museum of Natural History, with President Rusby in the chair. Sixteen persons were present. After the minutes of December 12 were read and approved, the following names were proposed for membership :